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hero of mediæval chivalry — no Sir Lancelot or Sir Galahad, no St. Louis or Chevalier Bayard — affords so good an image of what a man should be, as that drawn from the lives of these average soldiers of our war. America may well be proud of these sons who died for her; for their lives and deaths prove that they were not only men stout of arm and heart, but truthful, pure, tender, considerate of others, faithful to duty; and their lives and deaths show what is now the ideal of American manhood.

ART. VII. — *A Brief Treatise upon Constitutional and Party Questions, and the History of Political Parties, as I received it orally from the late Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois.*
By J. MADISON CUTTS, Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel, U. S. A.
New York: D. Appleton & Co. 12mo. pp. 221.

THE compiler or editor of this little book is the brother-in-law of the late Mr. Douglas, and explains in the Preface the character and authenticity of his work. "In the summer of 1859, Mr. Douglas remained in Washington; and as I was very desirous of receiving from him a statement of his own political faith, with the general views of a statesman upon constitutional, political, and party questions, I prepared, with his consent, a brief analysis of such subjects as I wished him to explain to me. We were in the habit of spending an hour together each evening, until all the questions I had proposed were answered." It is a work of no practical value. Its general historical information is vague and unsatisfactory; and its particular statements are often palpably untrue, as when, upon page 121, Mr. Douglas says that "nearly all the Republicans throughout the country went into its lodges," — meaning the ranks of the Know-Nothing party. This is a good illustration of the looseness with which Mr. Douglas was in the habit of stating facts. Thus, in his article upon the dividing line between federal and local authority, published in Harper's Magazine, which was an elaboration of all his speeches during the

Kansas debate, Mr. Douglas begins his history of the Jeffersonian plan by asserting that the territory which was ceded by Virginia on the 1st of March, 1784, was the first territory ever acquired by the United States. The truth is, that on the 29th of October, 1782, Congress accepted from New York her claim to Western territory. This is an unimportant fact, indeed, but it shows the inaccuracy of his statements. The graver errors of his account of the Jeffersonian plan reveal at least the gross ignorance of Mr. Douglas upon subjects upon which he was constantly dogmatizing. In the article of which we have spoken, he asserted distinctly that the prohibition of slavery after the year 1800 "never became a part of the Jeffersonian plan of government for the Territories, as adopted April 23, 1784." Now the facts are, that the anti-slavery proviso was supported by sixteen of the twenty-three members of Congress present on the 19th of April; but they were so divided as not to give the necessary majority of States, which was seven; and the proviso was defeated at that time. But it was readopted by the Congress of 1785, on the 16th of March, a fact which Mr. Douglas either did not know or which he conceals; while the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which was unanimously adopted, renewed the anti-slavery proviso of the Jeffersonian plan for every Territory over which Congress then had control. The object of Mr. Douglas's representations was to prove that the question of slavery was left by the fathers to the decision of the settlers in the Territories. The truth was exactly the other way. Mr. Douglas's article was one of the futile efforts made in the last days of slavery to impose upon a presumed public ignorance of the history of the country, and to make it appear that the fathers of the Revolution were as indifferent as Mr. Douglas and his party to the rights of man.

Those who are really interested to know Mr. Douglas's views upon the great questions of his time will probably look elsewhere than in Lieutenant-Colonel Cutts's book to find them. But such persons are very few, and will be constantly fewer. We have lived so fast during the war, and have become so familiar with great principles and sturdy character, that, although Mr. Douglas died but five years ago, he seems to have been dead for half a century. His name is already merely a

partisan memory, and we can look at him now as he will appear in history. Indeed, every honorable and thoughtful American has been in a manner forced to do so by recent events. For when the President of the United States, accompanied by part of his Cabinet, and by General Grant and Admiral Farragut, makes a public pilgrimage through the country to the tomb of Douglas, praising him lavishly as he goes, when William Henry Seward speaks of Mr. Douglas as a man "to whom the nation and the world owe an irredeemable debt," it is quite time for every man who values morality and honesty to protest against so gross an insult to American manhood and to the fundamental principle of the American government. The only act of Mr. Douglas's political life which can be remembered with honor was his willingness to vindicate the authority of the government against the Rebellion. In consideration of that act, the country was content to leave his name to the charity of silence. But if his example is to be cited to young Americans of another generation as noble and praiseworthy, it would be treachery not to tell the truth, that he was a warning, not an example; and that nothing showed the moral prostitution and political peril of the country more plainly than that, just before the war, he was considered by many persons to be a true statesman; for, of all our noted politicians, Mr. Douglas was the one who had reduced immorality in politics to a science. This is the single point in his career to which we now wish to call attention.

A man of plausibility and adroitness, Mr. Douglas was totally destitute of deep convictions or of moral force. His attainments were superficial, and his methods of public persuasion and appeal utterly mean and unscrupulous. He had a certain popular attraction akin to that of a prize-fighter, which was favored even by his personal appearance; and he might well be called the Benicia Boy of American politics. But he was instinctively shunned by nobler minds, and was most distrusted by those who most truly understood our government and its principles, and who believed most in the people. His ambition was uncontrollable. He lived for political effect, and constantly in the public eye. Like all demagogues, he despised the people whom he flattered; and while in his speeches there

was a certain vulgar familiarity with the crowd, there was never a generous impulse, or heroic thought, or a profound and humane principle. His speeches were often skilfully sophistical, but there was never any gleam of humor in them, nor grace of fancy, nor touch of pathos. They were incredibly commonplace; and we doubt if a single sentence from one of them survives in any school-book of declamation, or lingers in one human memory. He confirmed no young man's faith; he cheered no old man's despondency. His name is identified with a political dodge, a trick, an intentional deception, which might consign a race to endless slavery and plunge the country into hopeless commotion, and welcome, provided it made him President.

In all that Mr. Douglas said and wrote, the only proposition which has even the appearance of a political principle is what was known as "squatter sovereignty," or, as he preferred to express it, "popular sovereignty." This was his last monstrous bid to the slave power for the Presidency in the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. It was the substance of his speeches in Congress from the time of that repeal to his death; and it was the staple of that famous political tournament between him and Mr. Lincoln for the Illinois Senatorship, in which the very worst sophistry that has ever endangered the American principle, embodied in its most plausible champion, went down before the wonderful strength and skill of that principle itself, embodied in its greatest and most characteristic representative which our history has produced. There is no chapter of our political history which at this time we should so warmly recommend to the young student as the report of this great debate. Nowhere else are the moral principles upon which this government was founded, and consciously founded, so plainly and sensibly and racily set forth. Mr. Lincoln dealt with his antagonist with a half-amused, half-contemptuous air, as if admiring his vigorous battle, while he utterly despises and abhors his cause. He crushes Douglas's most elaborate and ingenious sophistries by main moral force. He explodes with a joke his most insidious appeals to popular prejudice. The very audience which Douglas had inflamed by a specious sneer, Lincoln surprises into nobleness by a frank appeal to their manhood.

It is not the least of the services of Abraham Lincoln to his country and to mankind, that, before directing triumphantly the war against the spirit which would have overthrown the government by force, he had thoroughly exposed, in the sophistry of Douglas, the spirit which would have overthrown it by demoralizing the people. The Rebellion sought to dam the stream; Douglas, to poison its fountains. The Rebellion was the battery in the open field honestly bombarding; Douglas was Guy Fawkes in the cellar stealthily plotting a secret explosion. It is small praise to him who had for years and years stimulated the passions of the Southern oligarchy, — and who, according to General Quitman, declared in 1856, just before the meeting of the Presidential Convention of his party, that the South was too easily satisfied, — that, when he saw he could not turn those passions to his personal purpose, he vehemently opposed them. The man who, after encouraging the enemy to the utmost, and carrying them powder and ball, then, discovering that he is not to be made their commander, suddenly declares against them, may be entitled to silence, but surely not to praise. The consuming ambition of Mr. Douglas's life was the Presidency. To secure that result he had taken in the interest of the South the only ground upon which, as he knew, the Southern policy had any chance whatever of being sustained in the Free States. For taking that ground in its own service the South deserted him, and defeated forever the ambition of his whole career. Then it rebelled against the government, and it is hard to believe that, in springing to defend the government, Mr. Douglas did not taste the fierce joy of personal and political revenge.

Mr. Douglas's doctrine of squatter sovereignty was merely the bold assertion, that a majority of a certain class of the population, arbitrarily selected, may do exactly what they please with all the rights and liberties of the rest. "A political community," he said in substance, "we are all agreed, may rightfully govern itself. Now a Territory is a political community; let it therefore establish such institutions as it prefers. Certainly men who are properly voters in the various States in which they live do not lose their capacity by going to a Territory. If, therefore, in that Territory they wish to have com-

mon schools, very well ; if not, not. If they wish to have slavery, very well ; if not, not. We may not like it, but the majority of the people must decide. It is their affair, not ours."

But who are the people ? That was a question he never pretended to answer, but which was vital to the whole discussion. He begged the entire debate by assuming that only white persons were people. "I admit," says Mr. Lincoln, "that the emigrant to Kansas and Nebraska is competent to govern himself ; but I deny his right to govern any other person without that person's consent." And Mr. Douglas was silent.

But while the assertion was politically folly, it was morally criminal. Follow it to any logical result. "If the majority wish to legalize blood-revenge, very well ; if not, not. If they choose to disfranchise all who are over thirty years of age, or who have aquiline noses, or red hair, very well ; if not, not. If they choose to tolerate murder or to encourage falsehood, very well ; if not, not. It is their affair, not ours. They are competent to decide for themselves." Now in a world where there were no such things as right and wrong, Mr. Douglas might have been a great statesman ; but in this world no man and no body of men can have a right to do wrong. Any political community may decide whether the legal rate of interest shall be six or seven or eight per cent. It may decide what taxes it will levy for necessary purposes. But no sovereignty of all the people or of one man has the right to deprive a single innocent person of his eyesight, or of the honest wages of his labor, or of any other of his natural rights. The majority have indeed the *might* to do these things, but that is all. In speaking of Burke, Macaulay, who was certainly not a visionary political speculator, says that he did not deny that Parliament was legally competent to tax America, as it was legally competent to commit any other act of folly and wickedness, to attain any man of high-treason without witnesses, or to confiscate all the property of all the India merchants. But from acts like these, he says, they are bound by every obligation of morality systematically to refrain. But Douglas could not plead the legal competence for his squatter sovereigns. His first step was a sheer assumption, and from that he gravely proceeded to confound might with right, insisting that morals had nothing to do with politics.

In the whole of the Illinois discussion with Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Douglas had the air of a man who is at last found out. He had been the undisputed great man of the West,—the Little Giant of his party; and lo! here was a giant-killer. It was Captain MacHeath in the midst of his gayest and most audacious rogueries suddenly confronted with the officer of the law, infinitely cooler and cleverer than himself, and with all the majesty of the law upon his side. The Captain scoffs and sneers and patronizes and cajoles, but in vain. He runs and doubles and twists, but to elude the swiftness and force of his pursuer is hopeless. Stung with conscious defeat and exposure, he flings mud and filth of every kind, but equally in vain. Speaking in a part of Illinois in which the prejudice against negroes was most bitter, Mr. Douglas does not hesitate to insist, with coarse insinuation, that Mr. Lincoln must be an amalgamationist. Mr. Lincoln quietly replies: "I protest against the counterfeit logic which concludes that, because I do not want a black woman for a slave, I must necessarily want her for a wife. I need not have her for either. I can just leave her alone. In some respects she certainly is not my equal; but in her natural right to eat the bread she earns with her own hands, without asking leave of any one else, she is my equal and the equal of all others." When the long debate between them ended, the glittering but preposterous sophism with which Douglas had dazzled the nation was ended also, and the whole country had been authoritatively recalled to the remembrance of the great truth, that our government rests upon a strictly moral basis, because it is founded upon a confession of the equal rights of man.

From this debate to the end of Mr. Douglas's life was but three years. Besotted with the fierce thirst for the Presidency, he went on uttering the most monstrous doctrines. In the resolution he introduced into the Senate, after the arrest of old John Brown, he betrayed the most daring disdain of the vital safeguards of the government. In his speeches in the Southwest, after his election as Senator over Mr. Lincoln, he outraged decency and common sense. He shouted that he did not care whether slavery were voted up or down. He affirmed that the white people of every State had a perfect right to en-

slave the colored part of its population or not, at its pleasure. He insisted that the fathers, in the Declaration of Independence, spoke and meant to speak of white people only, and white people of the Anglo-Saxon race; nor was he satisfied with that, but alleged that the equality spoken of was the equality of British subjects born and living in this country to British subjects born and living in Great Britain! He congratulated his hearers that the monstrous heresy of the incompatibility of a permanent continuance of Free and Slave States in one Union had been hurled back upon those who uttered it; and repeated the old folly of his speeches in Illinois, that "between the negro and the crocodile, he took the side of the negro; but between the negro and the white man, he would go for the white man." "But what, at last, is this proposition?" asked the remorseless Lincoln. "I believe it is a sort of proposition in proportion, which may be stated thus: As the negro is to the white man, so is the crocodile to the negro; and as the negro may rightfully treat the crocodile as a beast or reptile, so the white man may rightfully treat the negro as a beast or reptile."

But it was in vain that, after his election as Senator in 1858, Mr. Douglas made his most obsequious bow to the slave power at the South, and went haranguing the people from Cairo to New Orleans, saying with a smile, "Have slavery if you like it, my good friends; it is nobody's business but your own." The slave power, also, had found him out. The leaders of the oligarchy were terribly in earnest, and wise in their generation, and Mr. Douglas had sinned against slavery twice. First, he had not allowed it to go into the Territories, as of constitutional right; and secondly, he adopted, although for quite another purpose, the principle of the Republican party, which was perilous to slavery, that it was the creation of local and municipal law. This had, indeed, been the original plea of slavery, but it had changed its ground; for upon this plea it was condemned to a fair struggle with liberty, in which it was foredoomed. It now haughtily asserted its universal constitutional right. And this was essential; for, unless it could carry this concession, nothing but the sword remained. Mr. Douglas saw this, undoubtedly, as plainly as the Southern leaders; but he knew what they could not know, and would not know, that

the Free States could never be wheedled or blinded or bullied into such a position. He was entirely right in declaring that Mr. Buchanan's course in Kansas, and upon the whole subject of the nationalization of slavery, was fatal to the Democratic party; for it was open war upon the conscience, common sense, and self-interest of all the Free States. Mr. Douglas saw, and truly, that the sole hope of his party lay in his nomination, and he had certainly crawled low enough and long enough to earn it; but he did not seem to comprehend that the South, which was the inspiring force of the party, in adopting him, surrendered its ground of the constitutionality of slavery. Wiser than he, also, the Southern leaders fully understood the radical nature of the conflict. They knew that they could no longer rule the country through their party, and they were ready for the chances of civil war.

So his masters spurned him without pity. The very want of earnestness revealed by his reckless cry that he did n't care whether slavery were voted up or down, was sufficient reason for them to reject him; and utterly chagrined and enraged, he threw himself into the arena of the Presidential campaign of 1860 against them. He stumped the country, addressing acres and acres of people everywhere in the Free States, desperate, disappointed, embittered; counting upon his personal popularity, upon the national confusion, and upon the cowardice of the country. But, as always with a man who has no moral convictions, he had no perception of the true character of the people. Accustomed to appeal only to their basest passions and poorest prejudices, he knew nothing of the deeper and purer springs of popular action. In the tremendous contest of that year, Mr. Douglas represented nothing but his own ambition. Behind the words he passionately spoke, there was nothing but the unscrupulous career of a pettifogging politician. In his dire extremity there was no noble popular remembrance to succor him, no generous defence of imperilled right to shield him with its heavenly ray. The country was whirling onward to civil war, and he was tossed upon the wild current like a dried leaf upon Niagara. By day and by night he ranged through the land, offering it his stale and outworn trick as a panacea for the throes of birth and death with which it was convulsed.

The air rang with the stern battle-cry of the two great principles in conflict. "Slavery shall *not* go into the Territories," cried one. "Slavery shall go everywhere," cried the other. "Come, come, gentlemen, don't trouble yourselves about the nigger; let slavery take its chance," laughed he between. "The mills of God! beware! beware!" whispered in his ear the rousing conscience of the land. "The mills of God! There are no mills of God!" he cried;—and instantly he was caught up and ground to powder between the terrible mill-wheels of Liberty and Slavery.

This was the man who, while public sentiment was confused and the public conscience torpid, was accounted a statesman, but who, the instant that conscience awoke, shrivelled before its scorching inquisition, until now his name has no other significance than that of an unscrupulous and adroit politician. This was the man who trampled upon the fundamental principles of this government, and to whose grave the President of the United States makes a stumping pilgrimage. This is he to whom Mr. Seward declares that the nation and mankind owe an irredeemable debt, and of whom he affirms that he thinks "Stephen A. Douglas with Abraham Lincoln will live in the memory and homage of mankind equally with the Washingtons and Hamiltons of the Revolutionary age." Such words from such a man are inexpressibly mournful. For more fully than any other two men in this generation, Lincoln and Douglas illustrated in their lives and words and acts the two principles which have always contended and are still struggling for mastery in this country,—the despotism of caste and the principle of equal rights. Douglas said plainly: "The Declaration of Independence, when it declared that all men were created equal, had no reference to the negro; they were not talking of negroes nor thinking of them; they were speaking of white men,—men of European birth, European descent,—struggling for the rights of this continent against the tyranny attempted to be imposed upon them by the powers of the Old World. And hence they spoke of white men, that they were created equal, that is, equal to their brethren across the water." Lincoln said, with equal plainness, speaking of the framers of the Declaration: "In their enlightened belief nothing stamped with the Divine image and

likeness was sent into the world to be trodden on and degraded and imbruted by its fellows. They grasped not only the race of men then living, but they reached forward and seized upon the furthest posterity. They created a beacon to guide their children and their children's children, and the countless myriads who should inhabit the earth in other ages. Wise statesmen as they were, they knew the tendency of prosperity to breed tyrants, and so they established these great, self-evident truths, that when in the distant future some man, some faction, some interest should set up the doctrine that none but rich men, or none but white men, or none but Anglo-Saxon white men were entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, their posterity might look up again to the Declaration of Independence, and take courage to renew the battle which their fathers began, so that truth and justice and mercy and all the humane and Christian virtues might not be extinguished from the land; so that no man could hereafter dare to limit and circumscribe the great principles on which the temple of Liberty was being built. . . . You may do anything with me you choose, if you will but heed these sacred principles. You may not only defeat me for the Senate, but you may take me and put me to death. While pretending no indifference to earthly honors, I do claim to be actuated in this contest by something higher than an anxiety for office. I charge you to drop every paltry and insignificant thought for any man's success. It is nothing; I am nothing; Judge Douglas is nothing. But do not destroy that immortal emblem of humanity, — the Declaration of Independence."

We have a right to be both proud and glad of the fact — for it reveals the American people to themselves — that they chose the man who spoke these words to be their chief magistrate when the contending principles appealed to the sword; that they honor his memory with more tender reverence than any American was ever before honored; and that their present clear and firm and humane resolution to plant the government upon the truths of the Declaration of Independence shows that, though dead, he yet speaketh.